

SPARTANBURG COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY MESSENGER

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President's Letter

Dear Members,

The Spartanburg County Medical Society Board has been working hard over the last several months to strengthen your organization.

We have hired our new executive director, Robert Conner. I am pleased to report that Mr. Conner has been hard at work putting the Society in high gear. He helped us organize an event with the South Carolina Medical Association President, Dr. Black, addressing national health care reform on September 24th. This is the first of many successful events he will help bring to our Society.

We have successfully expanded our Corporate Friends Program to financially support our

Director's Letter

Dear Members,

My first month as Executive Director has been quite exciting. I am beginning to feel at home and get familiar with our organization.

The SCMS Board has been very informative in educating, directing and communicating with me our needs and goals for both the current and future timeframe. I would like to give a special thanks to Dr. Fritz Butehorn and to Dr. Larry Ware for their dedication and

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Letter	1
Directors Letter	1
Influenza	3
Report from your Metro District 9 Trustee	5

functions. If you know of a business that would like to join our expanding list of Friends, please contact any Board member.

We are in the final stages of planning for our celebratory Holliday Gala. This will be held the first Friday in

Please see *President's Letter* on page 2



Fritz Butehorn, MD

involvement in my transition.

The August end of summer family cookout was a great success at Cleveland Park. A great time was had by all. Last month, the South Carolina Medical Association provided a wonderful speaker, Dr. Robert Conner. Please see *Legislation* on page 3



Robert Conner

President's Letter from page 1

December and should be a joyous event. Elections will be held prior to the event for the upcoming year and we have had many excellent candidates come forward with interest in helping the Society. If you or any of your colleagues are interested in serving on the Board or on any of our committees, please contact Robert Conner.

Our Society is evolving to better serve our members. Please remember that the Spartanburg County Medical Society is YOUR society. We truly are here to help you do your

job and to improve the health of our community. We look forward to growing our membership and continuing to provide entertaining and stimulating events for our members. I look forward to seeing you at our next event.

Sincerely,

Fritz Butehorn, M.D.
Spartanburg Medical Society President

Influenza: Curbside Questions from Colleagues

By Michelle Carney, M.D.

Every year during flu season in the U.S., 5-20% of the population gets sick with the flu, approximately 200,000 require hospitalization for complications and 36,000 die. This year, due to the combined impact of seasonal and novel H1N1 influenza, flu season is anticipated to be worse than usual. Widespread infection has been reported in South Carolina since September. As influenza spreads through the upstate, our community will hopefully look to us for answers, and the news media will help educate rather than scare and sensationalize. The following are some of the questions I have recently had the opportunity to answer:

Q: *My daughter's college roommate was diagnosed with the flu. Should my daughter take prophylactic Tamiflu (oseltamivir)?*

A: No. Healthy people, young or old, do not need antivirals for prophylaxis. The best way to



prevent influenza is vaccination. Seasonal flu vaccine is currently available and the 2009 H1N1 vaccine will be available soon. Influenza is spread by droplet exposure: close contact (< 6 feet) to persons with respiratory infections. It is also spread by touching something with flu virus on it and **take him out of school and recommend Tylenol, fluids and rest.**

Please see *Flu* on page 3

Director's Letter from page 1

John Black (President of the SCMA). His topic was on National Healthcare Reform. This event was very educational for all of those in attendance and more importantly our physicians were able to share their viewpoints on the matter with the SCMA.

As we move toward the end of the year we will begin to focus on our Gala. This year's event will be held at the Piedmont Club on December 4th and will feature the Back Nine Band for your entertainment. We hope to see you there.

Next year, along with new board members, we

Flu from page 2

Why didn't they give him a prescription for Tamiflu?

A: Most healthy persons who get the flu do not need antivirals unless they have evidence of lower respiratory tract infection or are ill enough to require hospitalization. The course of this infection is generally self limited. Signs of worsening such as difficulty breathing, chest pain, cyanosis, vomiting, dehydration, decreased responsiveness or confusion would be rare and a reason for emergency care. Call the nephew's doctor back for such worsening. Because of the potential for bacterial superinfection after influenza infection, another thing to watch for is acute worsening after apparent improvement. If this happens, call the nephew's doctor back.

Early antiviral treatment is recommended for influenza patients with a higher risk of complications.

These include:

- Children under 2 years
- Adults over 65 and residents of nursing homes
- Pregnant women
- Those with chronic medical conditions or

look forward to strengthening our community health position, exercising our physician leadership and providing additional education in such important times in the healthcare community.

I look forward to meeting you all.

Sincerely,

Robert Conner
Spartanburg County Medical Society
Executive Director

immunosuppression:

- Pulmonary disease; especially systemic glucocorticoid requiring within the previous year
- Cardiovascular disease except isolated hypertension
- Active malignancy
- Chronic renal or liver disease
- Diabetes mellitus
- Hemoglobinopathies
- Immunosuppressed including HIV or transplant patients
- Neurologic conditions which compromise handling of respiratory secretions

Early treatment means within 48 hours of becoming ill. The choice of antiviral drug should be based on guidance from the CDC because they monitor for drug resistance and provide frequent updates. Drug resistance in influenza is a huge concern.

Q: How good is the rapid influenza test? What about the PCR?

Please see *Flu* on page 4

Flu from page 3

A: The rapid antigen test is at best 70% sensitive. Two factors which influence sensitivity are timing and specimen quality. Viral shedding peaks at 24 to 48 hours of illness and typically drops off quickly. A quality specimen is one obtained from the nasopharynx by a sterile swab placed there and gently rotated for several seconds.

DHEC will still do a PCR to confirm the diagnosis in patients ill enough to require hospitalization. Although this is the most sensitive and specific test for diagnosis of influenza, there are several limiting factors. The commercial test is exceedingly expensive and not well reimbursed so it will incur a large patient charge. The DHEC test is done in batches so turn around time varies.

The bottom line is: making a clinical diagnosis is acceptable and treatment decision should be based on current CDC guidelines which includes symptomatic management of the previously healthy low risk groups and antiviral treatment of the high risk groups. Antiviral options may change as flu season progresses. There are weekly updates at CDC.gov.

Q: *Do you think this vaccine is safe?*

A: Yes. The novel H1N1 vaccine is made using the same technique used to make seasonal vaccine each year. The only reason that it is a separate vaccine is that novel H1N1 infection first occurred in the spring of 2009, which was too late for it to be incorporated into the vaccine for this year's seasonal flu.

The process of making 2009- 2010 seasonal flu vaccine started summer/fall of 2008/early winter 2009 with identification of the predominant antigenic variants of circulating flu via

world surveillance. Once the chosen variants are manipulated, high yield growth in hens' eggs follows. After harvest, the virions are inactivated, disrupted with detergent and subunit hemagglutinin and neuraminidase proteins (the "H" and the "N" of the virions) are purified. From this product, vaccine is made. The process of making the novel 2009 H1N1 vaccine took the same stages and was done the same way; the "H" and the "N" are just different.

Vaccine efficacy is generally assessed as flu season is underway because as flu passes through the population there is a high mutation rate. The effectiveness of the vaccine in preventing illness correlates with how well scientists predicted how those mutations would change the virus.

When populations are vaccinated with something new, there is a question of vaccine immunogenicity. In the case of this vaccine, immunogenicity (development of a protective level of antibody) was excellent after a single dose in adults. In children under 9, two doses are necessary, and this is based on the nature of their immune response at that age.



Report from your Metro District 9 SCMA Trustee

By Larry Ware, M.D.

So here we are in 2009, and we have five (5) bills in Congress to forge into one which will determine the futures of our physician families. Multimillionaire Congresswoman and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi wants a determining vote by Thanksgiving on what she calls "Healthcare Reform". Senator Harry Reid is in trouble at home and faces rejection by his own constituency in our next election. President Barak Obama has won the Nobel Peace Prize, and I believe his own very intelligent eyes must now assuredly be on things other than our industry - things like national security, the economy and the fact that we are bankrupt, the reindustrialization of America and Mr. Obama's inevitable pending announcement of a 'great program of public works' to fix it all. I'd like to request the rapid transit national train system I was promised at Eustis Park Elementary School in 1958 by President Eisenhower's assigns in Scholastic American magazine- but I digress.

Your SCMA is working hard for you against overwhelming odds. The AMA has thrown you and your SCMA under the bus by allowing our President- a man who can achieve greatness- to hold forth the AMA's support for his ill-prepared Healthcare Reform initiative (which justly should be an initiative to reform

managed care health insurance excesses and monopolistic behaviors alongside medical malpractice reform such as 'loser pays').

Your fate is controlled by 17% of American physicians who pay dues to the AMA. Physician families in South Carolina are well- represented in Columbia by a superb SCMA team put together over the last years, and we are making progress; that progress pales in the face of the foolish and repressive federalist legislation facing us.

What if the other 83% of American physicians joined tonight? Think you could have some effect? Think you could make a difference? Think you could save the best of our health care system while taking control of it- your own rightful professional heritage from which so many of you have walked away? I do.

Join your SCMS, your SCMA and your own AMA and take it all back for yourselves and for your patients- your fellow American citizens. There is only one way. Do not split hairs- join hands and take the field together. Take back the AMA you own.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Ware MD



Spartanburg Regional

Spartanburg County Medical Society

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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.spartanburgmedical.org

Spartanburg County Medical Society is a non-profit organization under the laws of the State of South Carolina.

MISSION

Spartanburg County Medical Society's purpose is to bring together into an organization incorporated under the laws of South Carolina ethical qualified physicians Spartanburg County to promote the science and art of medicine and the betterment of public health unity, harmony and the welfare of the medical profession and to unite with similar organizations to maintain the South Carolina Medical Association and the American Medical Association.

MEMBERSHIP

Any person with the degree of doctor of medicine from a medical school approved by the American Medical Association or the American Osteopathic Association who has a valid medical license by the State of South Carolina and who agrees to uphold and adhere to the Bylaws of the Spartanburg County Medical Society is eligible to apply for membership, provided s/he practices principally in Spartanburg County.

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